

Finance Committee  
11/23/15 – 7pm  
Rockport Police Station

Present: Chairperson Laurene Wessel, Beth Dailey, Ian Crown, Wally Hess, June Michaels, Bill Wagner, Melissa Tingley, Roger Levine, and Mike Hughes

Rockport School Superintendent Rob Liebow attended the meeting to present the 2017 School Budget. He answered many questions asked by members of the Committee, and discussions ensued. The total amount of the budget is \$13,243,966 which is a 2.997% increase from last year. The budget works out to approximately \$13,583.00 per child.

The School Committee's district budget hearing is on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and Superintendent Liebow encouraged Finance Committee members to attend. There could be some changes in the budget between now and then. The School Committee has given this budget "concept approval." Superintendent Liebow will invite the Board of Selectmen to this meeting as well.

Superintendent Liebow explained that in 2006 there were 89 choice students. This year there are 236. The schools could not offer the kind of programs they do without the choice students. It is important to keep these programs so the Rockport schools will remain attractive to choice students. For a very small school system, it is able to offer many extras such as AP classes, numerous electives, and the ability to take courses on-line which are not offered in school.

Finance Committee member June Michaels asked Superintendent Liebow if he has ever received guidelines from the Board of Selectmen on how to balance his budget. He replied that he had not.

A public agreement was made last year with the Selectmen, the School Committee, and the Finance Committee that if the School kept their budget under 3%, the town would then provide 2.3% of the budget, forcing the School to continue to use their reserves.

A motion was made to approve minutes from 11/5/15 and 11/12/15 (amended), motion was seconded, vote was a unanimous yes.

Laurene discussed the role of a Committee Liason. The Liason is limited to attending the designated meetings and reporting this information back to the Finance Committee for further discussion and decision making. With that said, Laurene stated if a Reserve Request is signed off by the Town Administrator Linda Sanders, she would bring the request to the next meeting so the Committee can discuss it as a whole. Liasons should not be responding to Department Heads with individual decisions or advice regarding Reserve Requests. Moving forward, Department Heads may be invited to Finance Committee meetings to discuss their Reserve Requests.

There was confusion about why the Finance Committee does not look at the Economic Development Committee's budget. The Selectmen liason will come to a Finance Committee meeting to answer any questions regarding EDC's budget.

Next meetings are 12/3 and 12/10. The meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> may be cancelled if it is too close to the holidays.

Laurene made a motion to adjourn, it was seconded, vote was a unanimous yes.

